

Spirit of the Age.

A FAMILY NEWSPAPER—DEVOTED TO MORALITY, LITERATURE, AGRICULTURE, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

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FOR THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE.

The writer of an article on "Legislative assistance," which recently appeared in the "Spirit of the Age," is induced again to trespass upon the attention of the public. The last number of the "Communicator" contained over the signature of "T," a production on the same subject, worthy of consideration. Though we agree with many of the general reflections contained in it, yet, when its author goes on to enumerate to the number of ten, his chief objections to our propositions, we are compelled, because not yet convinced, to enter a modest dissent at least to some of those objections.

The 1st objection is, that we (the Sons of Temperance) do not need assistance from "the strong arm of the law."

2d. That we can, in time, stop the liquor traffic without legislative assistance.

3d. That it is contrary to our Order to interfere with legislation.

4th. By taking steps to put down grog-shops by law, we make enemies of the grog-sellers, and all hope of gaining them will be lost.

5th. If we begin to move in this matter, candidates will endeavor to secure our influence, and we will become a political party.

6th. The people have not yet complained of the license law; and if others can bear it, it is not so great a grievance to us as to require the risk of our great enterprise, in removing it.

7th. We have no right to inform others what laws are burdensome to them, and petition for their repeal, for the sake of others, while the laws do not oppress us.

8th. If the license law is an evil, public opinion will soon be enlightened on the subject, and the matter will regulate itself.

9th. As individuals and as a body, we ought to have confidence in the wisdom and patriotism of the legislature, sufficient to leave public concerns to its care.

10th. Any change in our objects and the means we employ, will be disastrous.

In our last we argued, though not perhaps so forcibly as to strike the brother's attention, that "Legislative assistance" is necessary to perfect the Temperance Reform.

Though our Order may be able to stand without that assistance—yet, if given to the extent we ask, it will accelerate our progress and make our position more secure.

Our article was intended mainly to show, that petitioning for such assistance would not "interfere with legislation;" at least, not in a manner "contrary to our Order," or to the rights of others.

The 3rd objection is included in our notice of the 1st.

As for the retailers, there are many who think themselves driven to the business to make a living; alleging that others would sell if they did not. Against them we entertain no malice. They are willing for the license law to be repealed. But the rest—those who glut over the destruction which they make—who fawn upon the inebriate until his last cent is gone, and then kick him booted out of doors—any profession of friendship from them is hypocrisy and a lie. We would as soon think of making a compromise with hell.

We hope the brother is mistaken in his 5th objection. Such a result might be a death-blow to our cause. If it would happen in the case supposed, we fear it would happen in any case. But we again refer to our last, where we anticipate "fears that might arise in the minds of some."

To the 6th, we say that previous to 1825, (if we remember aright) any body could retail without a license. The present restriction was then enacted; and in some counties, though no petitions have been gotten up, the people, we believe, desire further restrictions. As an evidence of it, the magistrates have several times shown a disposition to impose them. As for our Order, its existence is due to the fact that we cannot endure grievances to which others submit—among which, to remove the retailing system (we will allow) is a chief part of our "great enterprise."

7th. We inform others of what customs burden them, whenever we persuade men to join our ranks. "Petition for repeal" we have noticed. Our Order is established "for the sake of others" as well as of ourselves; and the license law does oppress us.

8th. In some counties public opinion now regards the license law as an evil, and we wish for such a law as will let the "matter regulate itself," in those counties.

9th. It is our confidence in the Legislature that makes us call on that body for assistance, in matters connected with the public welfare. How does Bro. T. reconcile with his confidence in Law-makers, our putting down by moral means what has been licensed by them? The fact is, it is the duty of all Reformers, as Miss Dix has done in the case of the insane, to convey to the

Legislature such information as may be of importance to the public and themselves—leaving the propriety, of passing necessary laws afterwards, where the people have reposed that power.

10th. We do not propose to change the objects nor the means of our institution.

We have thus glanced at the arguments of our respected brother. We may still be mistaken. Our remarks are submitted with diffidence, because we know the brother, and we know the soundness of his judgment. But as our first article, by its signature, was intended to draw upon the right person, any odium it might incur, we cannot be expected to retire from any position we have assumed, unless compelled to do so by the force of argument.

The following extracts occur in different proceedings of the National Division.

"WHEREAS, The National Division of the United States is clearly of opinion that the liquor traffic, licensed and unlicensed, is the great hindrance in the way of the Temperance reform, therefore, with a view to bring the entire influence of the Order to bear against this tremendous evil,

Resolved, That every Subordinate Division under this jurisdiction be and is hereby recommended to appoint committees to collect facts and statistics showing the tendency of such traffic upon the pecuniary, social, moral and religious interests of those engaged in it, as well as upon society at large, and also to hold a public meeting on the third Division of each quarter, beginning with July, to bring such facts before the people." Nat. Division 6th Session, 1849.

"The liquor traffic, if not in the majority, is united, and have thus succeeded in involving all the power of the law for their protection—and appeals to vicious appetites and corrupt desires are generally most potent over sin-ridden man. We must be united in our determination to expel the enemy from his lair, fasten upon him his political and judicial vestments, and show him forth in all his vile and naked deformity. The better disposition beginning to be manifested by many of our legislatures, induces us to hope the day is not far in the future when the liquor seller will cease to be regarded as a *civil functionary* created for the public good. The agitation of this subject by the Order is slowly, but I think surely producing an effect."—M. W. P. Cary's Report, 7th session, 1850.

"I have ever thought and still think that every thing incorporated into our system of operation should be subordinate to the one great object, and that in all that we do as an Order we should have our eye fixed upon the stupendous, god-like enterprise of ridding this earth of distilleries, dram-shops, and drunkards. The great question should be with us all, will this or that measure contribute to the cherished and central design of our organization? We must never seek for popularity or success at the expense of principle. With strong hands and a firm, unwavering purpose, we must unitedly attack the fortresses of the enemy, and batter down his walls, regardless as to who of us shall perish in the conflict." Valuedictory of the same.

"Intemperance has entered the halls of legislation, and so perverted the judgment of rulers that they have armed it with the sanction of the law—thus augmenting its frightful power and making the State a partner in the guilt." Public Dedication Ceremony submitted 7th sess. 1850.

One would suppose, from the above extracts (on which we will not comment) that our Order was engaged, with the retailing system, in a war of extermination. As we reason with the moderate and moderate drinker, to withdraw their support from this system, because their own and the interests of society require it, so we should argue with the various organizations of society, whose interests are at stake in the same matter. It would still be but the employment of moral means. If there were no laws against stealing and murder, the church might very properly convince the legislature of the necessity of prohibiting such offenses.

A very discreet writer recently called on the church to invoke "legislative assistance" in the matter before us. Who could hesitate to persuade a father not to let his son retail ardent spirits? And why shall we, or any other body interested to do so, fear to ask of the Legislature, for those counties which might desire it, power to put down the whole retailing system? It appears to us that the same principle applies to all these cases.

In Attorney General's The Justices of Guilford, (Ireland's Law vol. V.) Chief Justice Griffin remarks: "There are good persons, who think it would be conducive to the happiness of men to refrain from the use of spirituous drinks; and no one can dispute the shocking evils often produced by the excessive use of them. Therefore, it is very fit that benevolent persons, who entertain that opinion, should by persuasion, example, forming associations and other moral means, endeavor to induce men to renounce it, and in that all may wish them success, however many may despair of it."

Now, if the Supreme Court, in deciding a question of Law, could stop to comment with approbation, on the good done to the public by Temperance Associations, and express the opinion that their success is to be desired by all, surely the Legislature might well cast upon them a favorable eye, and enquire whether institutions which prevent so much evil, and effect so much good, are not worthy of its fostering care—are not worthy of some consideration among the hundreds of enactments made to render other institutions more beneficial to the public.

If it could be established, that by the removal of certain obstacles, under legislative control, we could remedy forever every evil springing from intemperance; that Legislature, which would refuse to remove such obstacles, would deserve to be handed down to posterity, branded with perpetual infamy. And just so far as there might be probability of destroying those evils, so far would deserve for instant attack to that Legislature. In either case, how would it be improper for us to present facts and arguments, establishing the necessity of assistance?

Chief Justice Griffin remarks, that "many despair of a success to be wished for by all." Our cause is not certain. If the Legislature, blind to the signs of the times, may neglect to favor a cause so highly promoting its own object, the Chief Justice, because the Law compelled him to refuse to Magistrates power

of prohibition, may have to regret, in some future case, that philanthropists, working by moral means, could not overcome a law-fed power; that the Sons of Temperance were subdued by a system, constantly diminishing their ranks, and preventing others from joining, by holding around them an enchanting spell, or affording them an easy, and as they thought, innocent enjoyment.

We believe much in the power of our Order; but we believe more in the power of temptation over the wayward heart of man—Many a man who would, to-morrow, vote to put down grog-shops, will drink as long as there is one in his county. We tell the voluntary retailer, and he may roll it under his tongue as a sweet morsel, there is a chance of his overcoming us. To prevent such a calamity, we are willing to receive aid from any respectable quarter. Suppose the Legislature imposes penalties upon us, that the church prohibit members from joining our Order, that schools and colleges, benevolent and other associations, the friends of society, and all the institutions of organized society, be turned against us—We would soon go by the board. These powers, so able to overthrow, are able to establish. They and we have the good of man in view as a common cause. In many cases, the accomplishment of our objects could be of service in our country. In all such, we avow, on our part, a willingness to receive assistance from any power able to give it.

GEORGE B. WETMORE.

Choice Literature.

Selected from Goody's Lady's Book.

HOLD NOT THE CUP TO THY BROTHER'S LIP.

The subsequent story may not be altogether useless in the moral world, though it lack the spice and the racy perfumes which genius is ever wont to embalm its productions. Should the moral intended to be conveyed be instrumental in doing good, in even one solitary instance, the unpretended author will feel that he has not written in vain.

Kind reader, wilt thou lend one thine ear whilst I tell thee a tale of "solemn woes?"

Edward McDonough, the only child of his parents, was a native of Scotland, and graduated at one of her time-honored institutions with the highest distinctions, when twenty-one years had just vested him in the rights of a free man. In consequence of some unhappy family dissensions, Edward's father determined to alienate the ancestral domain and seek a home and quietude on America's thrice happy shores. In a few weeks, our Scottish friend was ready for emigration. With tearful eyes and sad hearts, they saw the rocky shores of the glorious old fatherland grow dim and indistinct in the haze of distance, as the vessel bore them swiftly over "the vasts of waters." But night and the mild splendors of the moon throwing "a veil of silver light" over the bosom of the deep, soon gave a cheerful tone to their thoughts and allayed the excess of sorrow.

It seemed, however, that trouble was never to be absent from the breast of the elder McDonough. Now it so happened that he had been, haunted by a feeling of superstition from his early youth.

His father, mother, and a loved and only sister had all died when he was abroad in the army. Whilst death was stalking through the home of his childhood, dreams of woful import, conjoined with a strange, unaccountable depression of spirits, made him wish and yet dread to hear from Scotland. The immediate intelligence of his irreparable loss not only struck a pang of grief to the heart, but confirmed for ever the superstitious bias of his mind. What wonder is it, then, that he already began to regard Edward's future as darkened and blasted when, for three consecutive nights after embarking for America, he should dream that he saw him with clothes all tattered and torn, raving like a maniac, and brandishing a bottle over the head of a pale woman—her body bending like some "frail floweret before the wintry blast." During his collegiate course, Edward's ardent and excitable temperament had, more than once, drawn him into the maddening vortex of inebriation. His father remembered this circumstance and thought of his own nightly visions with a feeling bordering on despair. But, with the "iron purpose" of true heroism he resolved to banish those gloomy bodeiments of evil from his mind, and woo the kindly ministrations of hope. Yet, at times, the old superstitious dread would creep over him and freeze the very life-blood in his heart.

The favoring gales soon wafted the noble vessel to the land of liberty. Captain McDonough fixed his abode in "the sunny south" where flourished the orange, the palm, and the magnolia. Edward straightway applied himself to the study of our constitution, our laws, and our peculiar southern institutions. After much intense study and sober reflection, joined with observation, he was convinced that their legitimate and certain tendency was to develop all the elements of national greatness. Before applying for admission to the bar, he spent a whole summer in rambling mid the peaks and spurs of the Blue Ridge. He saw mountains, crags, wales, steeps, and water-falls presenting every feature and image of the sublime and the beautiful.

He was enraptured with the scenery. The paradisaical beauty of Toccoa, the sublimity of Tallulah, and the magnificence of Whitewater, were mirrored in the chambers of his soul, thence to be sketched and reproduced in miniature by his own pencil. His social susceptibilities were most favorably educated by the chivalrous tone and the courteous demeanor of the southrons. In short, he was enamored of his adopted country; and his mind, at once brilliant and profound, was soon threading the maze of politics as a stepping stone to preferment. He was among the number of those who, by their eloquence, assisted in elevating General Jackson to the presidential chair in 1828. After the election, he was admitted by special permission to the practice of law. In a few years, he was leading his circuit; for legal lore and his profession became his "pabulum vitæ."

The matters about which his mind was sorely and intensely occupied. His speeches were distinguished for argument—close, metaphysical reasoning. His logic, however, was illuminated and softened by the belles lettres of both continents. Fame and success were his. But in the very nature of things, it was impossible that the law should always remain mistress of his heart. At a ball in Savannah, Edward first saw Julia Stanley. Before the presentation, which took place directly after his *entree*, he remarked to a friend that he had just had a glimpse of paradise—had, at least, seen the bright ideal of his heart, and the realization of his fondest dreams. Julia was indeed, a "rare and radiant" creature.

"Angelic was her form; her voice he thought Poured more than human accents on the ear."

Her wit and intelligence gave to the enchanting beauty of her person a charm of perennial freshness and spiritual immortality. In conversing with her, Edward felt that, with such a woman as she for a wife, the decay of beauty would not be the death of admiration and love.

As to Edward's appearance, of which we have till now neglected to speak, it was truly noble and imposing. He was tall in stature, and his face was of fine Grecian mould. The dignity of thought sat enthroned upon his brow; and in his eyes shone the light soul and refined sensibility. The two were harmonious counterparts in taste, genius, and education. After the ball, Edward abandoned everything else to the dear society of Julia. Could such spirits be indifferent to each other? Had any of our readers been present on the bridal eve, and seen Julia's cheeks, rosy with the "celestial blush" of love, and likewise seen the look of unutterable tenderness with which Edward regarded her, a negative answer to our question could not have been given. Edward and Julia were happy, and they thought their happiness could terminate only with life itself. But the brightest skies are often obscured by the darkest storms. Edward's doom was fixed.

Dark, inexorable fate had interwoven gloom and shadow, murder and suicide in the web of his destiny.

Another presidential election was beginning to interest and excite the popular mind. Edward again took a conspicuous part in the canvass, and advocated the claims of the hero of New Orleans with distinguished ability and signal success. But what was remarkable for those times, he neither drank himself nor induced others to gulp the liquid fire!

But a tempter was at hand in the person of his own brother-in-law—Dr. Dunlap, who had married Julia's sister.

This sapient disciple of Esculapius was one of those contemptible, self-annoying creatures, in whose breast envy has a place and a lodgement. It has often occurred to the writer that, if any one passion or feeling bearing the semblance of evil be more hateful or more unaccountably strange than another, it is envy.

"Base envy that withers another's joy, And hates that excellence it cannot reach."

The doctor, envious of Edward's fame and distinction, by which his own consequence in the family of the wealthy and respected father-in-law was sensibly diminished, had "vowed in his base heart" that this rival—this bright luminary of the family and of the state—should suffer an eclipse. Having heard of Edward's early tendency to drink to excess, and knowing old Mr. Stanley's fondness for his morning dram, his plans were quickly and artfully formed. He determined to make Edward a drunkard, and that their mutual father-in-law should be the sub-agent in the consummation of the crime. He resorted to the most ingenious sophisms to convince the old gentleman that Edward's popularity, and consequently his usefulness, depended upon the moderate and judicious use of ardent spirits, both in drinking and in "treating." Nor was an opportunity favorable to the accomplishment of his nefarious designs long in presenting itself. After a keen and exciting debate before a large concourse of people, Edward and the other candidates mingled with the crowd; but it was evident to all that his opponents were getting the advantage of him, inasmuch as he stood aloof from the "whiskey barrels." Edward was not only thirsty and greatly

excited, but chagrined at the march his competitors had stolen on him by their peculiar system of electioneering. "The demons were swooping" and whirling about his "fated head." Whilst Edward was lost in a painful reverie, Dr. Dunlap came up with his blandest smile, and pressed him to go and treat the crowd. He refused to do so; but with apparently some slight hesitation. At this juncture, old Mr. Stanley approached the two, and clapping Edward on the shoulders, said, with a sort of good natured, authoritative tone,

"Come, old fellow, you must go and take a horn with your fellow-citizens, or the effects of all your fine speeches for Jackson will be lost entirely."

Edward followed him with reluctance; for his good common-sense told him that he was leaving the path of safety. The tide of popular favor was turned in his favor by the tide of infuriating poison let loose upon the toppers. From that day till the election was concluded, he drank more and treated more than anybody else. Andrew Jackson was duly elected president. The reaction consequent upon all undue excitement fell upon Edward's spirits with a leaden weight. Life had lost its natural and simple charms, and the "steep of fame" seemed rugged and thorny.

The once noble Edward was soon a confirmed drunkard—a harsh, cruel husband. His father was in despair. The mute agony of his stricken wife was unheeded. The very furies seemed to have usurped the place of reason. His downward course to ruin was marked by every species of cruelty. In less than three years, fortune, health and reputation were all wrecked and gone forever. The catastrophe of his life was awful in the extreme.

"It was the wild midnight, A storm was in the sky, The lightning gave its light And the thunder echoed by."

Cheating gamblers were chuckling with fiendish glee over the proceeds of their craft and fraud. Dunlap wins Edward McDonough's last thousand dollars in bank stock. Heated by brandy and made desperate by the losses he had sustained, Edward was stung to madness by some taunting expressions that fell from the lips of Dunlap. Seizing an iron bar which lay in the room, he clove the head of the tempter in 'twain. Edward rushed from the horrible scene. The murderous pistol he applied to his own aching feverish head—a sudden crash, and the pale ghost, with a shriek, takes its flight from earth.

Captain McDonough sank into the tomb, broken-hearted and desolate, refusing to be comforted. The lovely Julia never spoke nor smiled again. Upon the soul of Stanley there reared a shadow. He saw that his influence had been on the side of the infernal powers, and his soul shrank from the contemplation of the mischief it had wrought. His holy religion and temperance—total abstinence—from that time till the day of his death, received his most earnest and undivided attention. In the mean time, he retired to the country and built a fine mansion, whither he invited the pious and the intelligent. He was public-spirited and charitable—he was much given to hospitality. But the social glass was banished from his board, and over the door of the principal entrance to his house were written, in large capitals, these significant words: "HOLD NOT THE CUP TO THY BROTHER'S LIP."

THE TIFF.

OR, JEREMY SHORT GIVING IN HIS EXPERIENCE.

As thistles wear the softest down, To hide their prickles till they're grown, And then declare themselves, and tear, Whatever ventures to come near.

How are you, my dear fellow?—John, a chair for Mr. Graham—excuse my rising, you see I'm gouty—beefsteaks and bumpers have done it at last; and only sixty-seven, I'm really beginning to feel old."

"What and yet reading a novel?"

"Yes! I was reading of a young virago, who, with the appearance of an angel, had the temper of a demon. I felt the more interested in the subject because she reminds me of the heroine of that picture—the one over the mantelpiece—THE TIFF." I call it."

"I have often heard you say, Jeremy, that there was a story connected with it. Tell me the tale."

"Well—sit up the fire—take a cherry. John, retire till you're called—and now, my dear lad, we'll be as cozy for the rest of the evening as if we'd just eaten a Thanksgiving dinner, and had had our fill of boiled turkey and oyster sauce. 'Blessed be the man,' as Sincho Panza says of sleep, that first invented turkey—though to my taste, it would be better if they all ran about, ready boiled, swimming in gravy and oysters. But to my tale."

"When I was about twenty—that was in the year 1803—contemporaneous, I believe, with your grand-father's marriage—I knew as pretty a girl as ever sewed a sampler on week-days, or carried her prayer-book on Sundays to church."

"Bella Belgrave was the beauty of the district. Her step was such as a dryad's might be supposed to be; her eyes were as dazzling as the sun at noon-day; her lips were fragrant as strawberries; and twice as sweet; and her voice—sir, if you could have heard it, you would have fancied that a nightingale had nestled in her throat, or that St. Cecilia herself was come down from heaven. At twenty, a man falls in love as naturally as he takes to smoking; and he does both, I suppose, to prove himself full-grown. Well, I soon lost my heart to Bella. Nor was my suit hopeless. I am handsome yet, as you see—don't laugh at me you young scapegrace—and, of course, I was handsome at twenty. I wrote poetry, too, which won girl's hearts then just as a moustache does now; and I had a pretty little fortune; so I was soon the accepted lover of Bella."

"Bella possessed but one fault—she had a deuce of a temper. Now, a little sharpness in a wife may occasionally be very excellent, just to spice the monotony of matrimony, as mustard spices beef; but too much of it is as bad as spilling the contents of a whole pepper-box in your plate, when you had just taken the last bit of what was nice on the table. Not that Bella was what is called quick-tempered—I often wish she had been—for it is better to blow off superabundant steam now and then, than to keep it screwed stubbornly down, till, some day, a grand explosion takes place, that sends everything to kingdom come. Unfortunately, Bella took offense easily, and then 'nursed her wrath to keep it warm.' She had been so much petted that nothing short of abject slavery on the part of a lover would suit her; and 'faith, I grew tired at last, as you shall hear."

"One day I had been singing to her a ballad she had asked me to write to some of her music, when one of her friends came in—a dashing little creature she was—since a great grandmother, my lad, with three hundred and fifty lineal descendants, egad—and I, as in duty bound, did my best to be agreeable. Scarcely, however, had the visitor gone, when Bella, with a face like a thunder-cloud, began, 'Mighty sociable you and Alice Green are,' she said, 'I suppose you're half in love with her still? I always heard you were her devoted admirer.'"

"Now Bella," I said, 'don't be jealous—'

"'Jealous!' she exclaimed, stamping her little foot, while her eyes flashed fire; 'it is time to be jealous, sir, when every pretty face you meet tempts you to neglect me. But I'm not jealous—I'm only ashamed of you, sir.'"

"My dear, lovely creature," I began again, trying to take her hand. But she jerked it pettishly away.

"Don't dear me," she broke forth—"you know you don't love me; you never come here more than once a day, while Harry Saville, whom I dismissed for you—more fool I—used to be here three times a day, and always dined with us on Sundays."

"I began to grow red in the face, I assure you, at being thus talked to; but I mastered my rage—you know I'm a meek man, it's because of that I was chosen president of the Peace Society—and said meekly, 'Bella, dear don't be foolish! I love you better than all the rest of your sex put together; but you must expect me to neglect, nay, insult by my rudeness, every other woman I meet. Once for all let this be understood between us.'"

"Woman's rights were not yet thought of by my boy, and wives were expected to obey their husbands, as nature and scripture command. I deemed it high time for asserting my prerogatives, and spoke accordingly. 'Yes!' I repeated, 'you are unjust; you ask too much my dear Bella.'"

"She made no answer, but sat sullen, sulky. I again attempted to take her hand, and, thinking I had spoken too harshly, used a tone of mild persuasion. But she only replied by jerking her hand away, and removing her chair from me. I expostulated with her; I told her how idle was her jealousy; but, the more earnestly I defended myself, the farther she hunched her chair round, until she brought its back directly against that of mine."

"I now gave up explanations and sat silent. Her pettishness began to open my eyes. She had always been unreasonably exacting; her vanity for ever ran a head of possible attentions; and the jealousy, thus unjustly entertained, yet continually smothered by her sullen temper, was now finally come to a crisis. As I stole an occasional glance at her over my shoulder, I saw no longer any beauty in that sulky face. My love was fast changing into anger. I asked myself why I had so long submitted to her tyranny."

"Yet, fearing that I might be also in the wrong, though unconscious how, I made a last effort, after we had sat for some time in silence, to conciliate her. For this purpose I threw my hand o-